

NEWS RELEASE

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Federal Correctional Officer Charged with Conspiracy to Provide Contraband to Inmates

Peoria, IL - The federal grand jury in Peoria, Illinois today returned a three-count indictment charging a correctional officer at the Federal Correctional Institution in Pekin, Illinois, with conspiring to bring contraband items to prison inmates, as announced by Jan Paul Miller, United States Attorney for the Central District of Illinois.

The indictment alleges that from about 2000 to 2002, Keith Welch, age 41, of 4126 Hillmont, Peoria, Illinois, conspired with others to provide prison inmates with prohibited items including marijuana, heroin, creatine, alcoholic beverages, and cell phones. Welch was allegedly paid in exchange for bringing the prohibited items into the institution.

The indictment further alleges that Welch provided an inmate with marijuana on or about November 12, 2000. Welch is also charged with making a false statement on or about May 2, 2002, when he said that he had "no personal knowledge of any staff or inmates being involved in drugs," and that he had "never received any gratuities from inmates or families in return for favors."

Edward Dyner, Special Agent in Charge of the Justice Department's Office of Inspector General in Chicago said, "The Justice Department will vigorously pursue allegations of criminal misconduct against federal employees who betray their positions of public trust. DOJ Inspector General Glenn Fine is particularly concerned when allegations arise involving the distribution of drugs within a federal prison and the falsification of information during an official investigation."

(More)

Members of the public are reminded that an indictment is merely an accusation; the defendant is presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

A summons will be issued for Welch to appear in federal court in Peoria.

If convicted, each of the three offenses charged, conspiracy to provide inmates with prohibited objects, providing an inmate with a prohibited object, and making a false statement is punishable by a maximum statutory penalty of five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

The charge is the result of an investigation by the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Darilynn J. Knauss.

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